GUIDE TO THE RL4 TURKIC PEOPLES FILE

[The RL4 Turkic Peoples file is a general file containing brief information on the Central Asian Turkic language speakers (ca. 1918). The groups covered are:

I. Western Turks - all Turks as far east as Persia and Afghanistan, including those of European Russia.

II. Eastern Turks
- A. Iranian Turks
  - 1) Turkomans
  - 2) Sarts
  - 3) Taranchi or Ili-Tatars
  - 4) Usbegs
  - 5) Kazakh
  - 6) Kara-Kalpaks
- B. Turanian Turks
  - 1) Kirghis
  - 2) Siberian Turks
    - a) Yakuts
    - b) Siberian Tatars
    - c) Altaians

3) Turks of northwestern Mongolia and eastern Turkestan
   a) Kirei
   b) Uriankhai

There are separate files on three of these groups, which contain more specific information: MB1 Turks of Modern Turkey, RQ2 Kazak, and RV2 Yakut. For the other groups, no files presently exist, but varying amounts of further information are available in the following files: AH1 Mongolia, AI1 Sinkiang, AU1 Afghanistan, MA1 Iran, R1 Soviet Union, RH1 Caucasia, RL1 Turkestan, and RR1 Siberia.

The Turkic speaking peoples extend from modern Turkey and the Crimean, Caucasian, and Azerbeijani regions of the Soviet Union in the west to the northern borders of China and Mongolia in the east. They extend as far north as the Arctic Ocean (the Yakut, between the Lena and Yenisey Rivers) and as far south as the northern regions of Afghanistan and Iran. This is an immense area, stretching from approximately 27^{o} - 130^{o} east longitude and from 35^{o} to almost 75^{o} north latitude. They do not occupy this area by themselves, but share it with a variety of other language groups, including Mongolic, Slavic, Tungusic, and Samoyedic speakers.

The earliest known inhabitants of this region, the Scythians, were Iranian. Turkic peoples did not move into the region until after its conquest by Arabic Muslims in the seventh and eighth centuries A. D. Following the conquest, nomadic Turks from the east (Mongolia and China) began to move across the vast spaces of this country. The region

eventually became almost exclusively Turkic, but a strong Iranian influence was always present among the sedentary peoples. Many Turks settled and became agriculturalists and Moslems, but many continued as nomadic horse or cattle breeders as they are today (Area Handbook for the Soviet Union, 1971, pp. 167-168).

There is no single criterion which unites these people except membership in the Turkic language Family (Altaic Phylum). But there are over 29 separate languages and innumerable dialects spoken throughout the region. Some languages are mutually intelligible, most are not. Language and ethnic names often coincide. The principal languages (over one million speakers /1959/) are:

I. Southern Turkic
   A) Turkey or Ottoman Turkish - 24 million
   B) Azerbeijani - 3 million
   C) Turkmen - over one million (Turkmen SSR, Iran, Afghanistan)

II. Western Turkic
   A) three languages - Karaim, Kumyh and Karachay totaling under 300,000 (Ponto-Caspian, Lithuania, southern Ukraine)
   B) Tatar - almost 5 million (Tatar ASSR, Siberia)

III. Central Turkic
A) Kazakh - over 3 1/2 million (from the Caspian Sea to west of Lake Balkhash)
B) Two other languages - under 250,000 (Uzbekistan and Afghanistan)

IV. Eastern Turkic
A) Uzbek - over 6 million (Uzbekistan and Afghanistan)
B) Uighur - only 95,000 in Soviet Union, over 3 1/2 million in China (Sinkiang and southwestern Mongolia)

V. Northern Turkic
A) Nine languages including Tuva (100,000), Yakut (250,000), and Altai (45,000) (from Arctic Ocean to Lake Baikal)
B) Kirghiz - almost one million in China and Soviet Union (Kirghiz SSR, Tajik SSR, and Sinkiang, China)

(Voegelin and Voegelin, 1965, pp. 92-111). This breakdown differs to some extent from 3: Czaplicka, pp. 23-28, but it is both more extensive and more current, drawing from a larger number of sources.

While the area occupied by the Turkic peoples is large, the population is relatively small. Except for cases and river valleys, most of the area is desert or steppe incapable of supporting a dense population. Population figures vary, and when dealing with nomadic peoples, accuracy is unlikely, but estimates suggest that there are about 50 million Turkic

speakers today, half of them in Turkey (Voegelin and Voegelin, 1965, pp. 93-94).

Few generalizations can be made about these peoples. Many are sedentary agriculturalists and many are pastoral nomads. The majority are Sunni Moslems, but large numbers still practice ancient shamanistic religions, and there are some Christians (mainly Russian Orthodox) as well. Statements about social, political, or economic structure cannot be made except on the lowest level. (Information based on data from Area Handbook for the Soviet Union, 1971; Voegelin and Voegelin, 1965, Languages of the World: Turkic, Anthropological Linguistics, vol. 7, pp. 92-111.)

There is only one source in this file, although there are small amounts of data from a few other files such as AH1 Mongolia and AU1 Afghanistan. 3: Czaplicka is by a British anthropologist and is a general study of the Central Asian Turks, their history and their present situation. It is not merely an objective monograph however. It is the author's stated intention to discredit the then current (1918) pan-Turkish movement by demonstrating that wide divergences exist in terms of culture, language, physical type and heritage between the various Turkic speaking groups. Her discussion then, emphasizes differences rather than similarities. But it still presents detailed pictures of the peoples involved. The file is not large and contains only small amounts of information on the topics it discusses. The source does possess an extensive bibliography. It is intended to add at least two more sources to the file at some future date. The file was processed in 1955.]